Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5222nd meeting

Wednesday, 6 July 2005, 10.20 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Davis
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Scott

Agenda

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-40847 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Dauth (Australia) and Ms. Banks (New Zealand) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Türk: The Security Council has considered this item many times over the past seven years, most recently on 7 April 2005. Today I am pleased to report, on behalf of the Secretary-General, that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB), Papua New Guinea, has been fully implemented. The parties have now made a critical — perhaps the most significant — step in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. All of us at the United Nations should feel proud that we have been able to help. In my briefing today, I will summarize the main developments that have taken place since 7 April 2005 and will highlight the challenges facing the Autonomous Bougainville Government, which was inaugurated on 15 June 2005.

Let me begin with the subject of weapons disposal. By its letter of 19 May, UNOMB informed the parties to the Bougainville Peace Agreement that the weapons disposal plan incorporated into the Agreement had been implemented. Of a total of 2,016 weapons kept in containers, 1,896 were destroyed. UNOMB collected and destroyed an additional 155 weapons, bringing the total to 2,051 weapons. UNOMB made the determination that a substantial level of compliance by the parties with the implementation of the plan had been achieved and that, consequently, the security situation on the ground was conducive to holding the elections as planned. The parties agreed that it would be up to the Autonomous Bougainville Government to address the issue of the remaining weapons that had not been placed in containers or that had been stolen out of them during the implementation of phases II and III of the plan.

I should now like to say a few words about the election. The national Government of Papua New Guinea, in concurrence with the Bougainville leaders, requested the United Nations to coordinate the work of the international electoral observers invited by the Papa New Guinea Government. The United Nations election coordination unit set up in response to that request gave extensive briefings to the observers prior to their deployment in Bougainville and, in close cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission, facilitated their movement by helicopter to 29 of the 33 constituencies throughout the three regions of Bougainville — north, central and south. United Nations support in airlifting polling boxes, electoral officers and observers proved to be crucial to the election, ensuring its timely and orderly conduct. The Australian Federal Police programme in Bougainville also contributed to the process through the provision of additional helicopter hours to the Bougainville election manager.

International observers from Australia, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago and

Vanuatu, as well as representatives of the Commonwealth and Pacific Islands Forum secretariats, concluded that the elections had been conducted in accordance with the electoral laws. They were impartially and professionally managed, thereby ensuring the overall integrity of the electoral process. Despite some minor reported incidents, all eligible Bougainvilleans were given the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in a calm and peaceful environment. As declared by the international observers, the outcome of the elections accurately reflects the will of the people of Bougainville.

The elections last month were conducted by a non-preferential single-vote system. In subsequent elections, in accordance with the Bougainville Constitution, a preferential voting system will be used.

Of the 112,000 voters enlisted on the common roll, 69,343 cast their ballots. That constitutes 62 per cent of the whole electorate. The presidential campaign was convincingly won by Mr. Joseph C. Kabui, former President of the Bougainville People's Congress. He received close to 15,000 more votes than the runner-up, former Governor John Momis.

Many elected members of the House of Representatives are relatively young and new to politics. They have come with a strong mandate for change towards a more locally oriented approach that recognizes human rights and focuses on meeting basic needs at the grass-roots level.

On 14 June 2005, the parties to the Peace Agreement convened the final meeting of the Peace Process Consultative Committee. The Committee resolved that its objectives under the Lincoln and Bougainville peace agreements had been achieved. The parties agreed to dissolve the Committee and, in doing so, expressed their sincere appreciation for the chairmanship, guidance and support of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville. Following the establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, the relations between the national and Bougainville Governments will now be managed through the permanent Joint Supervisory Body.

With the dissolution of the Peace Process Consultative Committee and the closing down of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the Papua New Guinea national Government will deal with matters related to the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the relevant provisions of the National Constitution through already established procedures. Mechanisms are in place — including the Joint Supervisory Body, which will supervise and check on the implementation of the autonomy arrangements — to resolve any disputes that might emerge between the parties.

Although it is up to the Autonomous Bougainville Government to decide and plan its priorities, the national and Autonomous Governments intend to work together to address the challenges ahead through consultation and cooperation at the appropriate levels.

Following the completion of the weapons disposal plan and the current implementation of the autonomous arrangements, there remains the third main pillar of the Peace Agreement — the holding of a referendum on Bougainville's future political status in another 10 to 15 years. Responsibility for the conduct of the referendum will be shared between the Bougainville and national Governments. Included in the referendum will be the choice of separate independence for Bougainville. In accordance with the Agreement and the Papua New Guinea Constitution, the final decision on the outcome of the referendum will be left to the Papua New Guinea Parliament and to subsequent consultations with the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government has a unique opportunity to redesign the administration and the region's laws, to improve service delivery and to allow economic development to occur in the newly established Autonomous Region of Bougainville. The success of the elections and the current unity of the newly formed Government provide a strong base. The challenges of meeting the high expectations of the people, reforming the administration, improving revenue collection, improving infrastructure and dealing with the dynamic relationship with the national Government — among other matters — require continued support from the United Nations and other international actors.

The Bougainville administration is aware of the complexity of the challenges it is facing. It is in the process of developing a coherent development plan for the whole region. The plan needs to be realistic and based on available resources. The Bougainville Economic Development Task Force is already working

on it. The administration expects that the plan will change the current situation when policies and decision-making on development and implementation are donor-driven.

One third of the administration's income comes from donors, and the remainder comes from the national Government and aid schemes. The administration is collecting only about 1.5 per cent of its total revenue. The Autonomous Bougainville Government is presently running a deficit. Overall, about 50 per cent of the budget is used for salaries. One of the immediate priorities for the Government is to retrench public-service costs by eliminating 154 posts, which retrenchment depends on 1.3 million kina — the local currency — equal to approximately $450,000, for redundancy pay.

In building its capacity, the Government is going to pay more attention to traditional authority and customary ways at the grassroots level, especially through invigorating the role of the councils of elders. The small-group structure of Bougainville society lends itself to local institutions that can maintain law and order and promote human rights. Reliance on local government institutions will maintain the peace and reconciliation process among Bougainvilleans.

The economy of Bougainville is currently subsistence-based, with some primary agricultural and marine exports. Without major mining operations, there is little prospect of meeting the high expectations of the people regarding better government services and improved living standards. In his inauguration speech, President Kabui indicated the intention of his Government to start negotiations with the national Government and the Bougainville Copper Limited mining company on the transfer of the company's assets and prospecting authority to the Autonomous Bougainville Government as soon as practical. Given the sensitivity of the involvement of Bougainville Copper Limited in Bougainville, the Government may in the future hold wide consultations with the people on the potential resumption of exploration and mining operations. For the time being, agriculture — mainly cocoa and copra production and forestry — offers the best option for immediate sustainable gains in employment.

I should now like to say a few words about donor coordination and United Nations programmes in Bougainville for the future.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is now taking the lead to help the administration develop a donor coordination system. The system would aim at avoiding duplication and making assistance more efficient. Any new effort would have to complement existing assistance. The forthcoming donors dialogue on Bougainville, which is to be held in Papua New Guinea this fall, should lay a good basis for closer cooperation between donors and the Bougainville administration in meeting its economic priorities.

UNDP, in cooperation with the Australian Agency for International Development, plans to provide training for the offices of the Clerk and the Speaker, so that practices and procedures are understood and followed in accordance with constitutional, legal and other requirements. Bougainvillean members of Parliament will be offered awareness programmes on the importance of the House of Representatives as an institution of accountability. Technical assistance will also be provided in setting up a parliamentary committee system.

Another UNDP project will deal with planning and community support. The project will address local governance and leadership issues by working with the councils of elders, young people, women and other local institutions. Emphasis will be placed on the sustainability of local institutions and their integration with the administration. Direct support will also be given to key community institutions that are responsible for maintaining law and order. UNDP will assist small farmers with organization, extension, market access and policy formulation. It will also be expanding e-mail communications, using existing radios for connections rather than phone lines. Similar systems have already been effectively introduced in Solomon Islands.

UNICEF has begun to implement basic education, child protection and health and nutrition programmes with strong HIV/AIDS components. Projects will be developed to contribute to increasing access to schooling, especially for women. UNICEF will facilitate community-based efforts to reduce child abuse and HIV/AIDS discrimination. In addition, a range of sanitation, nutrition, malaria, maternity-care and immunization projects will be developed in communities where leaders request such assistance.

Another United Nations agency, the United Nations Population Fund, is working through the National Planning and Rural Development Department to assist the Government's planning department to analyse population trends, while the United Nations Development Fund for Women will be training female delegates on leadership and other skills.

I have given a brief outline of the activities that I expect in the future. But before concluding, I would like to express our appreciation to the members of the Council for the support given to the United Nations Political Office and its successor, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, in the implementation of its mandate. It has been a successful cooperative effort at the international, regional, national and local levels. The Secretary-General stands ready to provide further assistance to the parties in the post-conflict peacebuilding phase in Bougainville.

Today is also a good moment to reflect briefly upon the entire United Nations experience in Bougainville. The war in Bougainville was little noticed but brutal. About 15,000 people lost their lives in the conflict in 1980s and 1990s — a heavy toll on a population of about 160,000 at that time. The conflict started over the use of natural resources but developed features seen in many parts of the world in that period: violence against citizens, lack of respect for humanitarian law, a mixture of military and criminal objectives and, above all, suffering of innocent people.

The current process towards peace, which started with the Burnham process of 1997, the Lincoln Agreement of 1998 and the Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001, offered an opportunity for healing. In conformity with Bougainvillean traditions, reconciliation and restorative justice have been essential. For the United Nations this was a learning experience, one which taught us a great deal about post-conflict peacebuilding and the need to fully respect and incorporate local cultures and traditions. The United Nations became part of the process of what was termed "breaking spears and mending hearts", the description of peacebuilding offered by Pat Howley, an eminent author and educator well known to Bougainvilleans, as well as in other parts of the South Pacific.

Now, at the beginning of a new period of peacebuilding, the United Nations system has developed additional elements, some of which were suggested in my briefing today as well as in my previous briefings. The foundations established thus far give us reason to believe that, at this new stage, the United Nations system, with the support of donor countries, will again be able to help.

The President: I thank Mr. Türk for his briefing.

As there is no list of speakers for Council members, I would like to invite them to indicate to the Secretariat as of now whether they wish to take the floor.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of July. You shall have my delegation's full cooperation. We look forward to working under your leadership with you and other Council members. We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador De La Sablière of France for the very efficient way in which he guided the work of the Council during the month of June. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his comprehensive and final briefing on the situation in Bougainville as the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) comes to an end. We congratulate the Secretariat as well as UNOMB on fulfilling their important roles in the Bougainville peace process.

We are pleased to confirm at this Council meeting the successful conclusion of the mandate of UNOMB. The sense of accomplishment filling the Chamber is well reflected in the presidential statement issued earlier. I will not repeat what has already been said in the statement. I would like to stress, however, that it was through the efforts of the people of Bougainville, as well as the Government of Papua New Guinea, that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved. My Government pays tribute to the people of Bougainville and the Government of Papua New Guinea on their accomplishment.

We wish to take this opportunity to express our best wishes to Mr. Joseph Kabui, the President of the Autonomous Government, as well as to other elected officials, as they begin to undertake efforts for sustainable peace and the economic development of the region.

We are pleased that, in order to contribute to that process, Japan was part of international and regional electoral assistance efforts by dispatching election

observers and providing the necessary equipment. We hope that such contributions, together with those from other countries and regional organizations, facilitated the efforts for peace.

While the successful completion of elections in Bougainville marks a turning point in the peace process, there remain challenges. First and foremost, the strengthening of law and order in the region is a top priority. Even after the inauguration of the Autonomous Government, the security situation continues to be fragile. If law and order are to be firmly established, international cooperation is required, such as for the improvement of police force and the collection and disposal of weapons in the no-go zone.

Secondly, the sustained economic development of Bougainville is critically important for the region in the new phase of peacebuilding. The continued commitment of assistance by the international community will be required until such time that the Bougainville economy becomes more self-sufficient. Such support and cooperation should come not only from within the region, but also from a broader range of countries, as well as from the relevant United Nations agencies, as Mr. Türk has outlined. As for Japan, we will remain committed, through close consultation with the Government of Papua New Guinea, to providing continued support and economic and technical cooperation in areas where the needs are greatest, such as infrastructure, education and health.

Thirdly, the promotion of reconciliation with those remaining in the no-go zone is equally important. For the stability of Bougainville to be sustained, all the people in the region should enjoy the benefits of peace, and participation in the Autonomous Government should be inclusive. To that end, the Mekamui should respect the results of the elections and actively cooperate with the Government for the economic development of their region.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that, even after today's final deliberations in the Security Council on this subject, Japan will continue to follow closely further developments as the people in Bougainville strive to consolidate peace.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): First of all, I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July, and I am assured that we will have a productive term. In addition, I extend compliments to Ambassador De La Sablière for his very successful leadership throughout a demanding agenda during the month of June.

I express appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his important presentation and highly commend his role in the process.

Brazil welcomes the first general elections for the president and members of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, held from 20 May through 9 June, and wishes all the best to the newly elected authorities. It goes without saying that achieving peace is certainly much more difficult and challenging than winning a conflict. In the case of Bougainville, we are happy to recognize that there are no winners and no losers.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government to be led by President Joseph Kabui inaugurates a new phase in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We recognize the essential role played by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville leaders to solve their differences in a consistent and mutually acceptable manner.

We urge all those who freely chose not to participate at this stage in the electoral process to respect the outcome of those free and fair elections. We invite all the Bougainvilleans to join efforts to support the newly elected Government in its peacebuilding initiatives.

On this occasion, we also pay special tribute to other international partners to a peaceful resolution of that unfortunate conflict, namely, the Commonwealth and the countries of the region, including the members of the Pacific Islands Forum.

As recognized in the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 15 June, the experience of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, constitute quite successful examples of how the constitution of United Nations political missions — extremely small, but with clear mandates and benefiting from the acceptance of the local political actors — can provide an invaluable contribution to the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts in an efficient and effective manner, and should therefore be accounted as a success story and serve as future reference.

Brazil stresses its continuing support for the people of Bougainville and calls upon the international community, in particular the international financial institutions, the donor community and the United Nations specialized agencies, to assist the local actors and the Government of Papua New Guinea in the pursuit of their economic and social development goals, which are essential for a sustainable peace in the region.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on Greece's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to commend Ambassador De La Sablière and his delegation for their excellent and efficient leadership of the Council under France's presidency.

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his comprehensive presentation of what can be described as one of the successes of the United Nations in the implementation of a peace process. I would also like to express, on behalf of my delegation, our commendation for his dedicated service and contribution to the United Nations task of managing post-conflict situations in all parts of the world through the United Nations political missions. Danilo is the first high official of the United Nations who, after the Philippines was elected in 2003, briefed me on what it takes to participate in the Council.

The success story of Bougainville owes much to the perseverance, the political will, the courage and the wisdom of the leaders and people of Papua New Guinea and those of the new Autonomous Bougainville Government. My delegation commends the people of Bougainville and the Autonomous Bougainville Government for the successful conduct of the first general elections for the president and the House of Representatives, held from 20 May to 9 June. We applaud the people and the leaders of Papua New Guinea for achieving a major milestone in the Bougainville peace process with the inauguration on 15 June of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government. As the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea would say, seven under par is an excellent score.

Secondly, Bougainville is also an example of the key role played by the United Nations in encouraging and implementing the Peace Agreement forged by the conflicting parties. From the time the United Nations was requested by the Government of Papua New Guinea to play a role in the peace process and established the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville in August 1998, the Organization has been at the forefront of the peace and reconciliation process, acting as mediator to the parties to the conflict. It supervised the weapons disposal programme that contributed significantly to the stabilization of the security situation, which in turn provided the climate conducive for the elections to be held peacefully and credibly. Hand in hand with that stabilization, the United Nations also contributed to the political aspect of the peace process with the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and as Chair of the Peace Process Consultative Committee overseeing the implementation of the constitutional process that led to the adoption of the Constitution of the Autonomous Government and the preparations for the elections. The two successive missions, though small, have clearly demonstrated the critical contribution that a United Nations special mission with a clear mandate can make to a conflict situation.

Thirdly, the countries of the region, particularly Australia and the members of the Pacific Islands Forum, can claim justifiable pride in the Bougainville success story through the crucial support they provided in helping to bring the conflict to a peaceful end.

There are, of course, challenges facing Bougainville, as pointed out by the Assistant Secretary-General. These include establishing an effective and autonomous administration; developing credible policing, legal and judicial arrangements; meeting the budgetary requirements of an autonomous Government; and encouraging economic development. Meeting those challenges will require unity and cooperation on the part of all Bougainville leaders, which we urge.

Reconstruction is now the most pressing challenge for the new Government. Assistance from the international community, especially the United Nations and regional donors — which so far have contributed generously — will be even more necessary. That will preserve the gains that the peace process has achieved and also ensure that the peace dividends enrich the people of Bougainville.

Finally, as stressed by the Assistant Secretary-General, a number of lessons can be drawn from

Bougainville's success story that will be useful in other post-conflict situations. Let us profit from them.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I should like to join other delegations in expressing my wishes for a successful presidency to you, Sir, and to all of your colleagues from the Greek Mission. We would like also to pay tribute to the Ambassador of France, Mr. de La Sablière, for his successful presidency in June. We also are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his substantive briefing on the progress made in the Bougainville settlement and for his contribution to that end.

We welcome the successful holding of elections in Bougainville and the establishment of an Autonomous government on the island. Bougainville's acquisition of fully fledged autonomous status represents a historic milestone in the Bougainville peace process and launches a new phase in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We also welcome the efforts made by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the leaders of Bougainville to achieve the complete and timely implementation of their obligations.

We thank the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, which is completing its work, and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville. Following completion of the political role of the United Nations in the peace process — a priority area in the work of the Organization — Bougainville will continue to require assistance in restoration and long-term capacity-building in the autonomous province. We believe that the efforts of the relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as regional and international partners and donors, must aim specifically to achieve those goals.

In conclusion, I should like to echo the heartfelt words addressed to Mr. Türk, who is completing his mission in the Department of Political Affairs. We thank him for his effective and fruitful cooperation with the Security Council and in particular with our delegation, and we join others in wishing him every success in his future work.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As this is the first open meeting of the Security Council for this month, I should like, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to thank Ambassador de La Sablière for having successfully guided our work during the month of June. I should like also sincerely to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I wish you every success in guiding the work of the Council to a fruitful conclusion and assure you of the full support of the Chinese delegation.

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Türk, for his briefing on the latest developments in Bougainville. We are pleased to note that the general elections to choose the President of the autonomous Government and to appoint members of the regional House of Representatives were held successfully last month. The process of swearing in elected leaders and representatives went smoothly, marking a great achievement and a new historic phase in the Bougainville peace process.

In that connection, China wishes to extend its heartfelt congratulations to the Autonomous government and to the people of Bougainville and to express its appreciation to the Government of Papua New Guinea for its unremitting efforts comprehensively to implement the Peace Agreement.

This is the last meeting of the Security Council to deliberate on the question of Bougainville. We congratulate the Council on the successful conclusion of its work in the context of the Bougainville peace process. We also congratulate the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville on the accomplishment of its mission.

Over the years, under the leadership of successive Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, UNOB and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), have done outstanding work there by establishing credibility and trust among the parties to the Bougainville peace process and can serve as a model for small United Nations missions entrusted with handling regional conflicts. Their work is to the credit of the United Nations and has shed light and provided useful information on how to improve United Nations peacebuilding efforts in a year of reform.

Prior to this new, historic phase, the process of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bougainville did not proceed as smoothly as it could have, given the challenges and tasks facing the province. It is our sincere hope that the Autonomous government will live

up to the expectations of its people and remain committed to political reconciliation and economic development. We urge the various political forces in Bougainville to respect the choices of the people and to support the Government in its work.

We also call on the international community to remain committed to Bougainville and to help the Autonomous government to more speedily enhance its governance and effectively improve the lives of its people.

We are fully confident that, with the strong support of the Government of Papua New Guinea, with the assistance of the international community and through the painstaking efforts of the local people, the dream of a peaceful and dynamic Bougainville will be translated into reality.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): Mr. President, we, too, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of July. We would like to assure you of our full cooperation and support. I should like also to commend Ambassador de La Sablière and his delegation for his energetic leadership during the month of June. We also thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his comprehensive briefing on the progress made in Bougainville and the outline for its future.

We congratulate Mr. Joseph Kabui and the newly elected members of the Bougainville House of Representatives on their success in the Bougainville elections. We wish them well in meeting the challenges ahead. In the same spirit, we also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of many other individuals and institutions to the peace process in Bougainville. We trust that those positive contributions will continue to revitalize the Autonomous Bougainville Government as it prepares to embark on a new dispensation and a secure future.

We also congratulate the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea for their understanding and cooperation, which enabled the elections for the presidency and the Bougainville legislature to proceed competently, transparently and peacefully, as certified by the International Observer Team.

We pay tribute to the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), for their critical contribution in resolving the Bougainville conflict in an efficient and effective manner. The two United Nations missions in Bougainville have ably demonstrated the resourcefulness of small missions with clearly defined mandates in difficult circumstances.

The support provided by the international community, in particular the significant contributions by countries in the region together with those of the Commonwealth and the Pacific Islands Forum, is commendable and should serve as a model for regional initiatives and approaches in conflict resolution elsewhere.

It is our hope that the newly inaugurated Autonomous Bougainville Government will honour the commitment made during the elections to find ways of keeping other leaders, including competing candidates, actively involved in contributing to the common aspirations of the country. In the same spirit, the new leadership should seek to form an inclusive Government that draws on the experience, commitment and abilities of other leaders. As for those who did not participate in the electoral process, we urge them to respect the outcome, and we urge those with concerns about the outcome to pursue them peacefully in accordance with the law.

Bougainville faces many future challenges, including the need to develop an administrative capacity and an economy capable of sustaining autonomy by providing the people with opportunities for self-advancement and wider community prosperity.

As the Autonomous Bougainville Government takes office, it is our hope that it will maintain close cooperation and understanding with the national Government to make sure that the agreed arrangements for Bougainville autonomy work efficiently for their mutual interest and accommodation.

In the wake of the shocks and tribulations of the recent past, Bougainville needs to rebuild and rehabilitate. It needs the continued support of its partners and friends to revive its economy and to survive in a sustainable fashion.

From the depths of the crisis, Bougainville has successfully emerged to embark on a promising future. The people of Bougainville should be given a new opportunity to build on the peace that now prevails. That consideration needs to be reflected in the current exit strategy and the future strategy of the coordinated

United Nations presence in Bougainville, as outlined by Mr. Türk in his presentation this morning.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): First, it is my pleasure to welcome you, Sir, and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador De La Sablière and his team for their outstanding performance in steering the proceedings of the Security Council in June.

I am pleased to join other members of the Council in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for yet another solid and informative briefing, this time on the latest developments in Bougainville and the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville.

Romania welcomes the significant progress in the implementation of the peace process in Bougainville, which has now entered a new phase with the successful holding of elections. We commend the people and the leaders of Bougainville for so resolutely moving towards that important achievement. We welcome the establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government and extend our full support for its peacebuilding efforts.

We appreciate the outstanding role played by the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville in supporting the achievement of a lasting settlement of the conflict and in managing a successful peace process. The successful elections and the establishment of the new Autonomous Bougainville Government bring the United Nations Mission to a natural conclusion based on the effective discharge of its mandate.

Romania, too, emphasizes the need for continuing international assistance at a substantial level, including by United Nations agencies and programmes. Aid is still necessary for the rehabilitation and the capacity-building efforts of the Bougainville authorities with a view to consolidating the progress achieved so far.

I wish to express our appreciation for all the efforts undertaken by the Government of Papua New Guinea, as well as by the Bougainville parties, in the framework of the peace process. I would also like to commend the countries of the region, United Nations specialized agencies and international donors for the role they have played in supporting the peace process and making Bougainville a success story.

I would like to point out that Bougainville provides a positive example of how a United Nations mission can be successfully completed. We draw inspiration and confidence from the handling of the situation, which has been particularly welcome and helpful at a time when the international community is debating the United Nations reform process, aimed at improving the Organization's effectiveness and its relevance for protecting our freedom and improving our lives.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly commend Ambassador Danilo Türk, a distinguished representative of the finest diplomatic and political traditions in our region, for his dedicated and accomplished performance in the service of the United Nations as a top official in the Department of Political Affairs. We are grateful for his overall contribution.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I convey to you, Ambassador Vassilakis, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We wish you every success in presiding over the Council, and are certain of that success, knowing your abilities and talent. Secondly, we wish to thank and congratulate the Ambassador of France, Mr. Jean-Marc de La Sablière and his entire delegation for their excellent work in presiding over the Council last month. I wish also to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, for the information he has provided the Council on the situation in Bougainville.

We join the other members of the Council in welcoming the successful conclusion of the provincial elections and the establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Those are important milestones in the peace process on the island, leading to a new stage in the process of implementing the Peace Agreement.

In that context, we congratulate the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Government and the people of Bougainville on their efforts to advance the peace process and fully to comply with their mutual obligations. We urge all sectors of Bougainville to support the work of the recently established Autonomous Bougainville Government, led by President Joseph Kabui.

We cannot fail to mention the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in

Bougainville (UNPOB), and to congratulate them on their efforts and their work to keep the process on track over the years. We also express our gratitude to the countries of the region and to the donor community for their important contribution to those efforts.

In these circumstances, it is possible to say that this stage of the United Nations political participation in Bougainville has successfully concluded, leading to a new phase of consolidating the achievements; here, the development and humanitarian agencies will complete the cycle and take a leadership role.

In the light of the progress that has been achieved, we are pleased to note that the prerequisites for the exit strategy for UNOMB have been fulfilled and that the Mission is preparing to close its offices on the island. We believe that the contribution of UNOMB and that of its predecessor, UNPOB, throughout the process attest to the considerable impact that a limited United Nations presence with a clearly defined mandate can have in the search for a solution to a regional conflict. We believe that in this case the results achieved provide a good return on the investment made by the international community over the years.

Finally, we encourage continued international support for the efforts of the Government of Papua New Guinea and the people of Bougainville as they continue to work towards the consolidation of lasting peace, reconstruction and economic development.

Mr. Scott (United States of America): Permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Council presidency and to thank the Permanent Representative of France for his service as President during the month of June. I should also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his detailed statement and for his contribution to the success of the United Nations effort in Bougainville.

The inauguration of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government on 15 June marked a milestone after a decade of conflict in the Papua New Guinea province — a conflict that caused over 25,000 deaths. An international monitoring team reported no significant violence or voter intimidation during the elections of 31 May, despite the absence of foreign military or police support. Observers had feared that the departure of outside security forces would seriously undermine ongoing elections but, to the credit of the people of Bougainville, the elections of 31 May came off without undue disruption or fraud. The successful inauguration of the new Government is one of the last steps in the peace process.

The United States wishes to congratulate President-elect Joseph Kabui and members of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. We wish them success in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Bougainville. At the same time, we call upon them to respect the democratic outcome of the elections and to cooperate constructively with their legitimate new Government for a peaceful and prosperous future.

The United States also commends the Government of Papua New Guinea for its commitment to the full implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. That also would not have been possible without the support of the international community, especially other Pacific island countries and the Pacific Islands Forum, and the engagement of the Security Council.

The United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and its successor, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, both played key roles deserving of our special thanks. What the United States hopes will prove to be lasting peace in Bougainville is the result of years of hard work, negotiating, mediating and facilitating conflict resolution. We express our appreciation to all those involved in the growth of democratic movements and institutions, which are the best hope for human freedom and peace in all the world.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first discussion in the Council this month, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his briefing.

It is always a pleasant task to talk about a mission that is coming to a successful conclusion, and I believe that we are all pleased to be able to do that today. We welcome the holding, from 20 May to 9 June, of the first general elections in Bougainville — an expression of the will of the people of Bougainville that marks a historic turning point in the peace process and opens the door to a new phase in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

We congratulate Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville parties, which have undertaken to fully implement the Peace Agreement. We would also like to say how much we appreciate the contribution of the countries of the region to the process. We also commend the vital contribution of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville. That Mission, whose mandate expired on 30 June, made it possible for the momentum of the peace process to be maintained and represents a success for United Nations peacebuilding efforts. Clearly, there are lessons to be drawn from that success.

Following the election of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, there is a need to consolidate the gains made and to begin reconstruction efforts. We must ensure good coordination of the efforts of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF, and of bilateral actors, in the promotion of peacebuilding efforts. We must continue to ensure that the post-crisis process continues successfully in the region.

Ms. Davis (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking Ambassador De La Sablière and his delegation for the very able manner in which France presided over the Council during the month of June; my delegation looks forward to an equally successful presidency under your leadership, Sir, this month.

I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his briefing. I would also like to join others in paying tribute to all those involved in achieving the successful fulfilment of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). UNOMB may have been one of the smallest United Nations peace-related missions, but it has also been one of the most successful, and Bougainville represents an example of successful conflict resolution through a deliberate and well-guided process.

We take this opportunity to commend Tor Stenbock and his predecessor as Head of Mission, Noel Sinclair, for their efforts in fulfilling the founding objectives of the United Nations Mission and delivering this successful outcome.

We also recognize the central role of the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville parties, the important contribution of neighbouring States and donor countries, and the positive role of the Bougainville people, culminating in their participation in last month's elections. While the closure of UNOMB and the establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government signal the end of the United Nations political role in Bougainville, there remains a sizeable role for the international community in consolidating what has been achieved and facing up to the challenges ahead. In this regard, we welcome the continued activities of United Nations development and humanitarian agencies and the sustained engagement and support of neighbouring States and the donor community.

The challenges facing Bougainville remain considerable. As the Autonomous Bougainville Government has acknowledged, reconstruction and development need now to be given high priority. We also welcome President Kabui's commitment to tackle the growing problem of HIV/AIDS, which, if not contained, has the potential to undermine Bougainville's future prosperity.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I would also like to congratulate the French presidency on the outstanding way in which the work of the Council was conducted last month.

I would like to thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his very useful and comprehensive briefing on recent events in the Bougainville peace process. Since the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the peace process has seen considerable success. We welcome the holding, last month, of the first general elections and the election of the President and members of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. We pay particular tribute to the political will and the constructive attitude shown towards the peace process by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the leaders of Bougainville.

It is now important to ensure the maintenance of peace and stability in Bougainville. We welcome the support provided by the international community, in particular the important contributions made by countries of the region, by donor-community partners and by the United Nations system. We request the relevant United Nations entities and donor countries to continue to provide aid and to assist in post-conflict reconstruction. The international community should continue to help the Government of Papua New Guinea and the people of Bougainville in their efforts to pursue

economic and social development and to bring lasting peace to the region.

In conclusion, I congratulate the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and its predecessor, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, on their fine work and on their efforts to ensure the successful implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of July and to thank Ambassador De La Sablière for leading our work during the month of June.

Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his briefing today and, indeed, for his contribution throughout the years to the work of the Council and of the United Nations.

Denmark commends the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) for the work it has performed. With the successful conduct of the elections, my country is encouraged by the political process. The Observer Mission has played a crucial role in the final stages of the process and, together with previous missions, has contributed significantly to the success of the work of the United Nations in Bougainville. The swearing in of the new Autonomous Bougainville Government and the dissolution of the Peace Process Consultative Committee mark another milestone for the Bougainville peace process. We encourage the new Government to continue on the way back to stability and peace, democratic government and the rule of law.

On 26 May, during the Danish presidency of the Security Council, we had a fruitful debate on post-conflict peacebuilding (see S/PV.5187). At that meeting, the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency Ambassador Robert Guba Aisi, gave us an excellent account of the developments in Bougainville, from bloody civil conflict through peace and reconciliation to the present stage. As Ambassador Aisi rightly pointed out, it took real commitment by the leaders and the people of Bougainville to achieve peace and to choose the type of Government that would bring about development and prosperity. We commend Papua New Guinea for the constructive role it has played towards reaching that goal.

Denmark supported the Secretary-General's proposal to close the United Nations mission in Bougainville. That does not mean that Bougainville no longer deserves international political and financial attention. Indeed, Bougainville's success will not be complete until its socio-economic development is on the right track. United Nations funds and programmes are active in Bougainville, and so are many bilateral donors. Their assistance is irreplaceable and is a precondition for further progress.

In terms of the peacebuilding agenda, Bougainville is a success beyond itself. This case proves that, with local commitment, regional participation and the involvement of the United Nations, conflicts can be overcome, peace can be built and development can prevail. The Bougainville peace process constitutes an example to follow where possible and to learn from where relevant. It deserves our recognition.

The Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission is an important part of the intention to improve the international community's engagement with peacebuilding. Even if Bougainville has already moved past the early post-conflict phase and is well into the development phase, we should all actively commit ourselves to ensuring that Bougainville continues to be a success in the years to come.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation echoes the congratulations addressed to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2005 and the tributes paid to Ambassador De La Sablière of France for his excellent guidance of the Council's work last month.

Our thanks go to Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his excellent briefing on the successful conclusion of the Bougainville peace process. Here, the annals of the United Nations can reflect an indisputable success. That success was the result of the Organization's sustained efforts in Bougainville to provide ongoing mediation between the parties and to help them overcome their differences and build a new relationship based on mutual trust. An enormous distance has been covered since 1998. This long-term endeavour was carried out in phases. Each phase, described by Mr. Türk in his briefing, was marked by real challenges. If today we are able to speak of the success of the peace process, it is because those

challenges were met through an sustained approach implemented under the watchful and beneficent eye of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and its successor, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). The results are a tribute to their efforts.

We also pay tribute to the people, the authorities and the leadership of Bougainville. We offer special commendation to the donors that helped the central Government to meet its obligations under the peace process. The United Nations should draw lessons from this historic experience in order to enhance its peacebuilding capacity.

But the completion of the peace process does not mean the resolution of all the problems facing the province on its path to sustainable development. The province's Government and its legislature should shoulder their responsibility to strengthen and ensure the viability of the autonomy arrangements that have been put in place. It is important for the Bougainville authorities to work to reduce the heavy dependence on subsidies from the central Government; that dependence results from the lack of local resources to meet the province's budgetary needs. We urge donor countries to continue to support the efforts of the Bougainville Government. We are confident that the new provincial Government will successfully manage its relations with leaders in the "no-go" zone.

We now need to consider how best to integrate forces that have remained outside the peace process. Such integration would make it possible, for example, to complete the collection of weapons remaining in circulation.

In the light of what I have said, my delegation urges the United Nations to retain the ability to continue to monitor developments in the situation in Papua New Guinea after the closure of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Greece.

Like all previous speakers, I wish to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, for his final briefing on the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). The purpose of today's meeting is to officially celebrate the successful completion of UNOMB's mandate on 30 June. My delegation pays tribute to the Mission's vital contribution to the consolidation of peace and democratic governance in the province of Bougainville.

It is my pleasure to express warm congratulations to the Government of Papua New Guinea and to the people and the leaders of Bougainville on their determination to fully implement the Peace Agreement of 2001. Our congratulations go also to the President of the Autonomous Government, Mr. Joseph Kabui.

The road to peace and democracy bas been long for the people of Bougainville. On their journey, they had the most faithful and reliable of allies: UNOMB, which held effectively the chairmanship of the Peace Process Consultative Committee, facilitated the dialogue between rival parties and contributed to the successful conclusion of the weapons disposal plan and the destruction of some 2,000 weapons.

Our sincere thanks go to Mr. Tor Stenbock, Director of UNOMB and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and to all other staff members of the United Nations Mission, who served the interests of peace in Bougainville over the past seven years. They set a remarkable example to be followed by other United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Let me conclude by commending once again the members of UNOMB for their dedication to the cause of peace and their overall work and by wishing the people of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea a prosperous and peaceful future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): Since the launching of the Bougainville peace process in 1997, New Zealand has addressed open meetings of the Security Council on a number of occasions. We have welcomed steps forward and have urged parties to address issues where progress has lagged. We have on several occasions encouraged Council members to approve extensions to the small United Nations political mission that has been on the ground in Bougainville since 1998.

It is therefore with pleasure that I am speaking on an occasion that marks the end of the work of the

United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). The fourteenth of June saw the inauguration of the Autonomous Government of the Papua New Guinea province of Bougainville, a significant milestone in the Bougainville peace process. The successful and peaceful conduct of the elections means that the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville can exit, having fully discharged its mandate. Members of the Security Council, past and present, can feel fully vindicated that their decisions to extend the UNOMB mandate were indeed the right ones.

Marian Hobbs, New Zealand's Associate Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, has welcomed the successful completion of the elections as an historic moment and a cause for celebration. She described the peace process as a good example of how the United Nations and regional and other partners can work together with stakeholders in a conflict over a long period of time to achieve a peaceful resolution. Let me add to that New Zealand's deep appreciation for the work of the United Nations in Bougainville. I thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his introductory statement today and for his support for the process.

Even by United Nations standards, Bougainville has been a difficult operating environment owing to its remoteness. Nevertheless, the United Nations succeeded in establishing a light and responsive presence that usefully complemented regional initiatives, including the New Zealand-led Truce Monitoring Group and its successor, the Australian-led Peace Monitoring Group. The United Nations political mission was a good example of successful, demand-driven United Nations action in the field. New Zealand is particularly grateful for the contributions of United Nations staff, both those from the Department of Political Affairs and those who served in Bougainville itself. Their commitment has been a major factor in the success of the United Nations mission.

As we move to the next phase of the Bougainville peace process, the economic development of Bougainville will become an increasingly important focus. New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work with the United Nations and its funds and programmes to support the people of Bougainville in fulfilling their aspirations to a peaceful future.

The President: I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I should like to begin by suggesting that no one take too much notice of the draft statement that has been circulated in my name. I saw it only a few minutes ago, and it is so manifestly unsatisfactory that I shall be extemporizing for much of the time.

Apart from anything else, the draft that members have is tasteless enough not to offer our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and not to thank our French colleagues for their very effective leadership of the Council last month. We should also particularly like to thank Danilo Türk and his colleagues for their contributions and for his presentation today. In that respect, I am delighted to see Valery Marusin in the Chamber and to congratulate him on the work he has done over many years on this issue.

We commend the role that the United Nations has played in the Bougainville peace process. But today, I want particularly to applaud all the parties — the Government of Papua New Guinea, the Bougainvilleans themselves and the United Nations — for bringing an international peacebuilding operation to a successful end. That is not a usual occurrence here in the Council, and I think we should all take great satisfaction in success when we see it.

The Bougainville conflict was one of the South Pacific's longest-running and bloodiest conflicts. Indeed, by global standards, it was quite nasty: between 1989 and 1998, an estimated 10,000 to 18,000 people may have died as a result of the conflict. Of a population of around 200,000 people, up to 70,000 were displaced from their homes and moved into care centres and camps. Those are shocking statistics.

Frankly, the situation in Bougainville — as we have said many times — has received too little international attention, not here in the Council, but more broadly. I must say, with a slight note of bitterness, that that is altogether too typical of the attention that issues arising in our part of the world generally receive in the world at large.

The establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government last month, following successful elections, was a momentous event in the process of establishing and consolidating peace in Bougainville. The United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) was small, but it made a strong — indeed, vital — contribution to the peace

process. In that respect, it would be wrong not to acknowledge the contributions of the members of UNOMB on the ground.

We particularly appreciate the Security Council's past agreement on a couple of occasions to extend the time of UNOMB's presence in Bougainville. Ending that presence too soon would have risked a recurrence of the problems there. In that respect, I particularly congratulate the Security Council for taking a cautious, prudent and conservative approach to the end of a peacebuilding operation. The Council has done very well, but I should just like to say in passing that that is a reminder of the particular potential utility of a peacebuilding commission in this house.

As I said, we congratulate the Government of Papua New Guinea and the people of Bougainville on their hard work and the progress they have made. In particular, I would like to recognize the contribution of the women of Bougainville, who — if one is familiar with the situation on the ground there — have had a wonderfully normative impact on their male leaders. The contribution of the Bougainvillean community in general is a shining example to the world as a whole.

We have been a consistent and proud supporter of the Bougainville peace process, and we are pleased to have worked alongside the United Nations and regional partners — including New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu — through the Truce Monitoring Group, the Peace Monitoring Group and the Bougainville Transition Team. Australia remains strongly committed to efforts to ensure lasting peace and development in Bougainville. We look forward to continuing to work with the United Nations through its agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF.

Lastly, I particularly congratulate my friend and colleague the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea, Mr. Robert Aisi, on his consistent and strong focus on this issue during his tenure here. It has been a delight to work with him.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): First, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your delegation well in the work ahead of you. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador De La Sablière of the French delegation for their work in the month of June, which was technically when the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) expired.

I wish to express my gratitude for the issuance of the presidential statement on Papua New Guinea. I would also like to thank all the Council members that have spoken to express kind words to my Government and the new Autonomous Government, as well as for the observations that each of them has made, which have been noted. I would like to thank my two colleagues from New Zealand and Australia for their kind words and for the supporting roles they played in helping us with this matter.

I would also like to thank the Council for this opportunity to deliver a short address on what is a historic occasion for Papua New Guinea. Today is a day for which people throughout Papua New Guinea, including our sisters and brothers in Bougainville, together with our friends in the international community, have been working, hoping and praying for: the day when the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, completes its assignment. Almost seven years after the United Nations established the United Nations Political Office/Observer Mission in Bougainville, that day has at last come. This is an occasion for modest celebration by everyone involved: the people of Bougainville, who have experienced conflict and now peace, their fellow citizens around Papua New Guinea and the friends of the peace process here at the United Nations and in many Member States.

However, practical peacebuilding in Bougainville is obviously not yet complete. In certain respects, it never is, either there or anywhere else. Peace and good governance require ongoing attention and effort if they are to be sustained and made part of our legacy to succeeding generations. But so far, at least, the peace process in Papua New Guinea's newly autonomous Bougainville region is a success. As I have already suggested, it will require continuing commitment to keep it that way.

The United Nations can be truly proud of the role it has played on the ground; so can the Member States that contributed truce and peace monitors at an earlier stage, namely, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu. So, too, can our friends in the international community who continue to provide foreign aid,

namely, Australia and New Zealand again, the European Union, Japan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and other United Nations programmes and specialized agencies.

The Bougainville peace process has been a people's process at every stage, from the truce reached almost eight years ago, through the coming into force of the permanent and irrevocable ceasefire, to the negotiation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and its signing in August 2001, the drafting of the Bougainville Constitution and its adoption just before Christmas last year, weapons disposal and, now, the election of the Autonomous Bougainville Government. That is in part why it has taken somewhat longer than many of us originally expected. But it is also a source of its strength. So, too, is the depth of the commitment that successive national Governments of Papua New Guinea have shown to the principle of working to secure lasting peace by peaceful means, and doing so on a bipartisan national basis. The two have been well matched: the people at the grassroots level and the national leadership. Having experienced the losses, suffering and pain of violent conflict, they have cooperated for the sake of peace.

The goal and the means have been inseparable. Both have been based on the shared commitment to peace and the achievement of lasting peace by peaceful means. That has not just been a matter of words. The commitment has been deep in the hearts of people on all sides. While there have been occasional setbacks and delays, there has been no turning back. The people's involvement explains both the strength of the process and the time it has taken.

In that regard, Papua New Guinea, on behalf of all parties involved in the peace process, offers sincere thanks for the understanding and patience of our friends in the international community and for the willingness of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to agree to repeated extensions of the Mission's mandate. The outcome of our combined efforts is what we are discussing today, that is, the successful conclusion of UNOMB's mandate.

The people of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea as a whole have been fortunate in the professional and personal qualities of UNOMB's successive Directors. They include the man who set up the Mission, Mr. Valery Marusin, who works in the Secretariat, here in New York. He has been a continuing source of sound and much-appreciated advice through the reports he has helped prepare for the Security Council and in the help he has provided to the parties in Papua New Guinea. His successor was Ambassador Noel Sinclair, who served as Director for more than five years. He, in turn, was followed by Mr. Tor Stenbock, who will remain on the ground until the middle of August winding up the Mission.

Ambassador Sinclair chaired many important meetings between the parties, including some of the most sensitive political negotiations, and facilitated the process through which agreement was reached. Following in his footsteps, Mr. Stenbock has overseen the conclusion of the agreed weapons disposal plan, the adoption of the Bougainville Constitution within the framework of the Papua New Guinea Constitution and the election of the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

All three of those United Nations officials participated in other important developments along the way. Each was supported by truly excellent and committed staff, both personnel who came from other countries and those locally engaged. On behalf of all parties, Papua New Guinea offers sincere thanks to all those people. We are indeed fortunate to have had them living, working and setting such inspiring examples among us. We wish them all Godspeed as they move on.

On the evening before the Autonomous Bougainville Government was sworn into office, the last Director of UNOMB, Mr. Stenbock, called a meeting of the body through which the parties had consulted and cooperated in managing the peace process, the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC). UNOMB had previously certified that the agreed weapons disposal plan had been carried out and that the election should proceed.

No one believes that Bougainville is now weapons-free, though many Bougainvilleans and other Papua New Guineans want it to be. What we can say is that the way that UNOMB went about forming its judgements was sensitive to mutual confidence, people's sense of security and community judgement. Like other aspects of the Bougainville peace process, weapons disposal was in many respects a bottom-up process. The methods UNOMB employed when Ambassador Sinclair verified and certified stage II — and Mr. Stenbock did much the same at stage III —

paid close and proper attention to the public's concerns.

Having fulfilled the purposes for which it had been set up, the PPCC then agreed to dissolve. On the next day, the Autonomous Bougainville Government became the legitimately elected representative of the people of Bougainville. The joint supervisory body to be set up under the laws implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement will be the key mechanism for consultations, ongoing cooperation and the resolution of any disputes between the national Government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

On 15 June, the day following the last meeting of the PPCC — in front of an audience that included the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Sir Michael Somare, and other national and Bougainville leaders — the newly elected members of the executive and legislative branches of the Autonomous Bougainville Government took an oath before the Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea in which they swore to uphold the Papua New Guinea Constitution. This was a truly impressive occasion; and all the more so when one recalls that some of the oath-takers had previously described themselves publicly as rebels.

An international election observer team, ably coordinated and supported by the United Nations, had observed and reported on the election. The team's report identified a number of administrative shortcomings and made some helpful recommendations for improvement. Its overall judgement was that the defects did not adversely affect the overall integrity of the election. Dissatisfied candidates have the right to go to the court of disputed returns to seek appropriate remedies. Some may still do so. That is their democratic right.

It is nonetheless pleasing to note the judgement of the international observer team that "the election was competently and transparently conducted in all key respects". The report also states that the observers were "immensely impressed with the commitment and patience of the people of Bougainville throughout the entire process". That testifies to the people's desire for democratic government. It provides strong reason for confidence about the prospects for future good governance in Bougainville. That judgement is strengthened by the orderly and respectful way in which unsuccessful candidates accepted the results.

It is very much to the credit of Bougainville officials, as well as the Papua New Guinea electoral commission, who gave them such strong and positive support, that the international election observer team went on to commend the dedication of all of the officials involved. The positive attitudes displayed in the community, together with the cooperation of officials, sends a very strong signal of hope as other aspects of the agreed arrangements for Bougainville autonomy are implemented.

On behalf of all of the people of Papua New Guinea, the national Government would like to congratulate the first President of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, Mr. Joseph Kabui. We also congratulate the Vice-President, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives, the newly-appointed ministers, and all other elected members. We wish them all well in meeting their respective responsibilities. We are especially pleased to note that two key positions — a senior minister and the Deputy Speaker — are held by women. The very positive role women played in starting, progressing and supporting the peace process on the ground makes their appointments especially welcome. The election of a number of former combatants as constituency members is a further, positive sign that peace and normalcy are no longer just dreams.

UNOMB's assignment has ended. Peace and future peacebuilding in Bougainville must now be sustained by the people of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea as a whole. The national Government will continue to honour the commitments that successive Governments-of-the-day made in signing the agreements paving the road to peace. It will continue to do so on a bipartisan, national basis.

However, many challenges still remain. Those include developing an economy capable of sustaining autonomy; promoting the kinds of development which provide opportunities for individuals and communities to help themselves; encouraging and facilitating ongoing reconciliation and mutual respect in the community; and ensuring good governance so that the first two objectives and others can be achieved.

Here, Papua New Guinea believes, the United Nations can continue to play a very important and positive part. Papua New Guinea welcomes the contributions that UNDP, UNICEF and other United

Nations programmes and specialized agencies make on the ground. We appreciate the contributions UNDP's Bougainville planning and community support project is expected to make to building capacity and strengthening good governance in support of the Autonomous Bougainville Government. In doing so, we are pleased to note the continuing presence of United Nations personnel on the ground, not as participants in a peace process but as partners in building capacity for a better future. Their presence helps to remove any doubt or uncertainty about whether the international community is still concerned and will continue to be involved after UNOMB has completed its mandate. It shows very clearly that the United Nations continues to care. The United Nations is still on the job.

It is for that reason that Papua New Guinea would like to suggest that the appropriate bodies consider the option of retaining UNOMB's existing assets in Bougainville and handing them on to UNDP and other arms of the United Nations that will continue to operate in Bougainville. A continuing United Nations presence in Arawa, in particular, would help provide assurance in the area where the Bougainville crisis began, close to the area which Francis Ona and his supporters continue to regard as a no-go zone exclusive to themselves and people to whom they allow entry or transit.

Mention of Francis Ona and his supporters in the no-go zone around Panguna highlights one of the areas in which the Bougainville peace process is not yet complete, even though UNOMB has come to an end. But as I have already observed, peacebuilding never ends. It is a continuing challenge. It is always possible to do better and more, even in the best-run, most democratic and affluent societies.

In the case of the Bougainville peace process, everyone involved has learned a great deal. Its character as a people's process has meant that it has not always moved at full speed, but progress has been real. While there have been challenges, there has been no turning back. Practical peacebuilding must keep moving ahead.

There are, clearly, a important lessons to draw from the experience. In that regard, Papua New Guinea believes that there should be considerable advantage in having a joint lessons learned exercise in which Papua New Guineans and United Nations experts can reflect on experience and identify what has been learned. The results, together with ongoing experience, are likely both to give and to gain benefit for the United Nations peacebuilding commission included among the proposals for United Nations reform.

Let me place on record, on behalf of all parties, Papua New Guinea's sincere appreciation for the contribution that UNPOB and UNOMB have made to peace and the common good of Bougainville and the rest of Papua New Guinea. We are grateful for the continuing understanding and support we have received from Secretary-General Kofi Annan. We thank the States members of the Security Council for agreeing to UNOMB's establishment and the extensions required to achieve the outcome we are marking today.

Papua New Guinea sincerely appreciates the support which the international community has given to making and building peace at home. It is vital that we all keep working together to achieve global peace.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to make mention of Mr. Danilo Türk's contribution to the peace process. He has been both a guide and, on many occasions, a good adviser to myself, to my Foreign Minister, who has visited here, and to the Government. I thank him very much from the bottom of my heart for all his efforts.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I should like to inform the members of the Council that, in the course of this meeting, I have learned that the term of office of Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk is ending in three or four days. Therefore, I would like to express to him — I am sure, with members' agreement — our thanks and appreciation for his continued cooperation with the Council as a whole and with its members and to wish him the best in his endeavours in the future.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.